SEE FOLLOWING NOTE

PLEASE NOTE THAT PAGINATION APPEARS IRREGULAR, BUT THE TEXT IS COMPLETE.

VOIR NOTE CI-APRÈS

VEUILLEZ NOTER QUE LA PAGINATION EST ERRONÉE MAIS LE TEXTE EST INTÉGRAL.

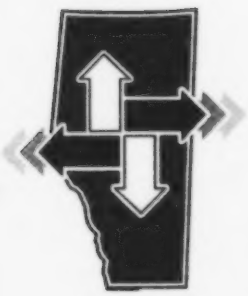
Micromedia
ProQuest

789 East Eisenhower Parkway
PO Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
toll free: 1-800-521-0600
fax: (734) 997-4247
web: www.micromedia.ca

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

Annual Report

April 1, 2006 - March 31, 2007



Great planning leads to great futures – www.acat.gov.ab.ca

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

11th Floor, Commerce Place
10155 – 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L5

Phone: (780) 422-9021
Fax: (780) 427-0423
e-mail: acat@gov.ab.ca
Web: www.acat.gov.ab.ca

ISSN 0383 - 5057

Annual Report Contents

Chair's Report 1

Vision and Mission 3

Highlights from Strategic Priorities 4

Goals and Accomplishments 5

- Core Business 1 5
- Core Business 2 6
- Core Business 3 8
- Core Business 4 9

Chair's Report

The Honourable Doug Horner
Minister of Advanced Education and Technology
342 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Horner:

On behalf of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) and in accordance with ACAT's terms of reference, I have the honour of providing you with the Thirty-Second Annual Report for the year ending March 31, 2007.

Alberta's post-secondary institutions continue to be strongly committed to Alberta's transfer system, whose basic principle is that a student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated. Council's work revolves around matters that will assist learners in their quest for lifelong learning. The 32nd edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* showcases the post-secondary institutions' willingness to cooperate and collaborate for the benefit of the learner.

As the Alberta post-secondary scene changes, ACAT adapts and progresses. Thanks to our network of "Contact Persons" which includes a representative from each of the 36 post-secondary institutions, the *Online Alberta Transfer Guide* now has over 28,000 active and nearly 38,000 grandfathered transfer agreements.

Two significant accomplishments took place in 2006-2007. ACAT hosted *Alberta Recognizes Learning*, a Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) on June 13 & 14, 2006. The Forum engaged stakeholders in discussion on key issues surrounding the implementation of PLAR and next steps for all stakeholders in working toward solutions. The Forum culminated in the development of a number of recommendations for moving forward on PLAR, including a recommendation to develop a provincial PLAR Framework, which I understand the Ministry is currently developing. In addition, ACAT held a stakeholder consultation on March 29, 2007 on assessing and defining the role of ACAT and the transfer system in Alberta's post-secondary education system. Recommendations for action are currently under development, which will help to inform ACAT's 2007-2010 Business Plan, as well as the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology's discussion on the *Roles, Responsibilities and Mandates Framework* for the post-secondary system.

On behalf of ACAT, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the post-secondary institutions that are part of Alberta's transfer system as they continue to explore ways and means of facilitating smooth transitions for students. I would also like to thank the Ministry for the support provided by the Secretariat and the department.

Sincerely,

Lucille R. Walter

Lucille R. Walter, BEd, DipEd
Chair

Vision

Alberta's post secondary institutions work cooperatively to provide a transfer system that is responsive to the needs of learners in the matters of admissions, transfer credit and the recognition of prior learning.

Mission

The mission of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is to be a catalyst for necessary change and an advocate for learners in the areas of admission and transfer to educational programs.

ACAT provides leadership and direction in the improvement and enlargement of educational opportunities for learners through inter-institutional transfer.

ACAT also plays an active role in the implementation of these policies through monitoring, mediation and research. Council has a continuing responsibility for facilitating improvement in communications and working relationships across all institutions and programs regarding the admission of transfer students and the award of transfer credit.

To carry out its mission, ACAT:

- Identifies issues and explores resolutions to these issues with stakeholders;
- Advocates for learners at both a general level, through its Principles, and specific level through interaction of ACAT staff with learners;
- Communicates with stakeholders and encourages communication among stakeholders on matters regarding admissions and transfer;
- Provides a forum for discussion of issues arising out of environmental change and trends related to post-secondary education; and
- Conducts research to appropriately inform all participants and stakeholders in the transfer system.

Highlights from Strategic Priorities

ACAT has identified strategic priorities to respond to the significant opportunities and challenges influencing its ability to achieve its goals and strategies for 2006-09. Through its review of internal and external challenges, the strategic priorities described below were identified and worked on concurrently, in addition to the important ongoing core businesses of ACAT.

Learner Transitions

ACAT continued to provide leadership to ensure that secondary to post-secondary admission issues were addressed. Further work was done to ensure clarity of information for high school students to help them select appropriate courses to meet entrance requirements of post-secondary programs through enhancements to the *Transfer Guide* and information provided in Learning Clicks presentations.

National and International Leadership

As a leader in admissions and transfer, ACAT continued to assist other jurisdictions in Canada to understand the transfer system by participating on the Council of Ministers of Education Canada Working Group on Transfer.

Established the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT), which is co-chaired by ACAT and the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT).

ACAT's Profile

The profile of ACAT was raised through enhanced communications, increased public profile and improved communication tools. Presentations were made at a number of local, provincial, national and international conferences and workshops.

Held a consultation session with ACAT member institutions on assessing and defining the role of ACAT and the transfer system in Alberta's post-secondary education system.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Alberta Recognizes Learning, a Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) was held June 13 & 14, 2006 in Edmonton. The Forum engaged stakeholders in discussion regarding key issues surrounding the implementation of PLAR, possible solutions to overcome those barriers, and next steps for all stakeholders in working toward those solutions.

Research

ACAT continued to use research to inform the admissions and transfer system and measure the achievement of ACAT's goals.

The Alberta Post-Secondary Graduate Outcomes Survey included questions on post-secondary transition. Survey results allow ACAT to continue to monitor and examine long term transfer patterns, as well as the profile of the transfer student.

Goals and Accomplishments

ACAT has identified four goals with specific outcomes that describe the end results it wants to achieve in fulfilling its mission.

Core Business One: **Admission practices and policies at post-secondary institutions are clearly articulated.**

ADMISSION

GOAL 1 **Facilitate the development and maintenance of fair and equitable admission practices and policies at post-secondary institutions.**

Outcomes

1.1 Students make smooth transitions from secondary to post-secondary and post-secondary to post-secondary studies.

1.2 Students have improved opportunities to apply for admission.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Transitions:

- Concluded the Social Studies and Science articulation process.
- Continued post-secondary to post-secondary articulation committee meetings in the areas of Engineering, Education and Biological Science.
- Established a secondary to post-secondary articulation committee in Mathematics and post-secondary to post-secondary articulation committees in Computing Science and Cree.

Academic Upgrading:

- ACAT continued to consult with the Provincial Academic Upgrading Coordinators (PAUC) to explore expansion of academic upgrading courses for admission to post-secondary programs.
- Charts illustrating academic upgrading courses accepted for admission to college, technical institute, university or private university college programs in lieu of those offered in regular high school programs were published.

Admission Processes:

- ACAT Chair met with and provided feedback to the Alberta Post-Secondary Application System (APAS) Task Team on ACAT's role in APAS and the importance of reflecting admission and transfer principles in the development of a common application system.

Core Business Two: **Facilitate agreements among post-secondary institutions to acknowledge and recognize appropriate previous learning experience.**

TRANSFER

GOAL 2 **Learners receive appropriate educational credit when they transfer from one Alberta program to another.**

Outcomes
2.1 An effective and efficient student transfer system.
2.2 Prior learning assessments are given system-wide recognition.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Enhancing the Transfer System:

- Published the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and updated the *Online Alberta Transfer Guide* weekly.
- Established the *Online Transfer Guide* as the official record of transfer credit to ensure learners and institution contact persons have access to the most current information.
- Saw an increase of 16% in the number of by-course transfer agreements and an increase of 4% in the number of by-program transfer agreements in the 2006-2007*Alberta Transfer Guide* and on the web site.

Monitoring Effectiveness of Transfer:

- Produced the annual Transfer Patterns Study.
- Chair's membership on the Campus Alberta Quality Council ensures that degree approval process includes consideration of transfer credit.
- Included questions on post-secondary transition in the Alberta Post-Secondary Graduate Outcomes Survey. Survey results allow ACAT to continue to monitor and examine long term transfer patterns.

Ensuring Accuracy of Transfer Information:

- Continued to enhance collaboration with institutional Contact Persons to review all transfer agreements before production of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

Supporting the Enhancement of Prior Learning:

- Hosted *Alberta Recognizes Learning*, a Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) June 13 & 14, 2006 in Edmonton. The Forum engaged stakeholders in discussion regarding key issues surrounding the implementation of PLAR, possible solutions to overcome barriers, and next steps for all stakeholders in working toward those solutions.
- Developed recommendations and next steps for moving forward on PLAR, including the recommendation to develop a provincial PLAR Framework. A Framework is currently under development by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology.
- Based on participant feedback, a PLAR Workshop is scheduled for May 16, 2007 to give participants an opportunity to explore the facets of PLAR that are most relevant to their institution, including curriculum development, quality assessment process, resources, and training for faculty and staff.

GOAL 2 ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTINUED

Streamlining ACAT Procedures:

- Updated ACAT *Principles, Policies and Procedures* and revised the criteria and process for admissions to the Alberta transfer system. Posted updated documents on the ACAT website and advised Vice Presidents Academic and Contact Persons of the revisions.
- Defined criteria for institutional members to remain in good standing and outlined procedures when members do not comply.
- Articulated Council member roles, responsibilities and conduct at meetings.

Core Business Three: **COMMUNICATION**

Ensure that learners and other stakeholders have timely and accurate information about admissions requirements, course and program transfer opportunities and transfer policies, and provide a forum for inter-institutional discussion of admissions and transfer issues.

GOAL 3

Learners have access to current, accurate information on admissions and transfer policies as well as course and program transfer opportunities.

Outcomes

3.1 Information to assist high school and potential transfer students is available.

3.2 Alberta post-secondary institutions have a forum for inter-institutional discussion of admissions and transfer issues.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Enhance Information Available to Students:

- Continued to work with institutional partners to produce an annual compilation of all transfer agreements contained within the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and the *Online Alberta Transfer Guide*.
- Promoted the *Alberta Transfer Guide* through the Learning Clicks program and the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS).
- The ACAT public web site received over 5 million hits; a 6% increase from the previous year.
- Continued to provide the Transfer Infoline service by responding to nearly 300 e-mail and telephone inquiries.

Transitions:

- Continued to produce advising charts to support admission of high school students from other provinces applying to Alberta post-secondary institutions.

Inter-Institutional Discussions:

- Ensured there was an opportunity for a round table discussion at every ACAT meeting.
- Ensured the host institution at ACAT meetings has an opportunity to make a presentation on their institution.
- Maintained the Contact Persons Listserve as a communication medium.
- Held annual Contact Persons meeting, with which participants expressed satisfaction.
- Held a consultation with stakeholders on March 29, 2007 on assessing and defining the role of ACAT and the transfer system in Alberta's post-secondary education system. Recommendations are currently under development and feedback from the consultation will inform the development of ACAT's 2007-10 Business Plan as well as the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology's discussion on the *Roles, Responsibilities and Mandates Framework* for the post-secondary system.

Core Business Four:

EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

Inform Albertans about the benefits of our admissions and transfer system, and assist and advise other jurisdictions about the procedures for and benefits of establishing and maintaining an efficient and effective admissions and transfer system.

GOAL 4

Albertans are informed about the benefits of our admissions and transfer system and ACAT serves as a model for other jurisdictions.

Outcomes

4.1 Albertans are aware of the benefits of our admissions and transfer system.

4.2 Provide advice and assistance to promote inter-provincial portability of courses and programs.

4.3 Reinforce ACAT as the authoritative voice on Alberta admissions and transfer.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Enhance Understanding of the Benefits of Transfer:

- Presentations were made at conferences, workshops, career fairs and within Alberta Advanced Education and Technology to raise general awareness of ACAT.
- The ACAT Secretariat met with the executives of Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council (ACTISEC) and Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS).

Develop Strategies to Increase Participation of Aboriginal Learners:

- Met with representatives of the three ACAT–member Aboriginal colleges in order to build relationships and determine what is needed to better facilitate transfer of credit.
- Established a post-secondary to post-secondary articulation committee on Cree to aid in facilitating transfer of students taking Cree language courses.

Increase use of transfer guides in other provinces:

- Participated in national meetings on credit transfer and PLAR.
- Hosted a meeting with transfer professionals from other provinces to discuss the feasibility of establishing a Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Tranfer (PCCAT). The Consortium was established on June 21, 2007, with Alberta and British Columbia as co-chairs and the next meeting is scheduled for June 2007.
- Under the Alberta–British Columbia Memorandum of Understanding, finalized and signed the ACAT–British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) Protocol promoting information sharing and enhanced credit transfer.
- Received anecdotal evidence that ACAT is perceived as a national leader in the establishment of admissions and transfer systems.